

# SelfInformed

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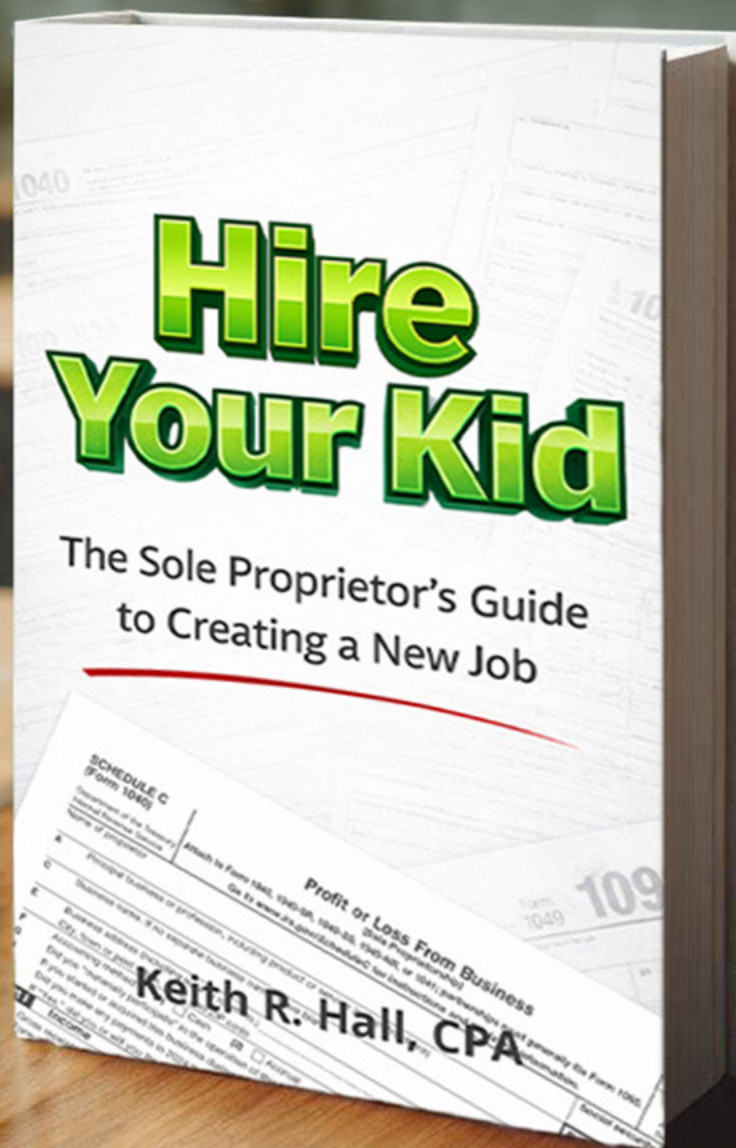
20  
25

GROWTH  
GRANT  
WINNERS



# Build Skills. Build Wealth. Start at Home.

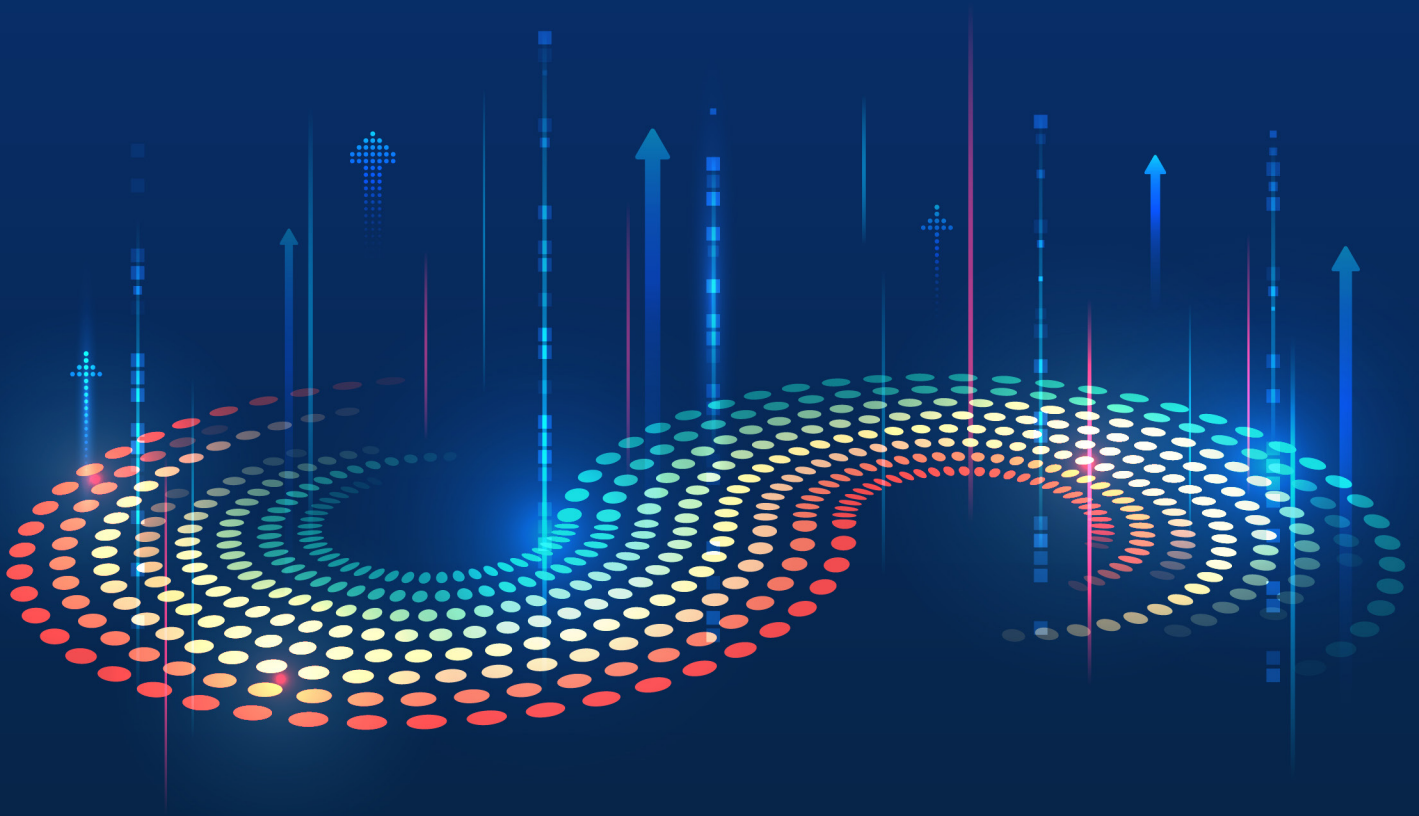
The Sole Proprietor's Guide to Creating a New Job



[HireYourKid.com](http://HireYourKid.com)

# Momentum, Energy & Efficiency

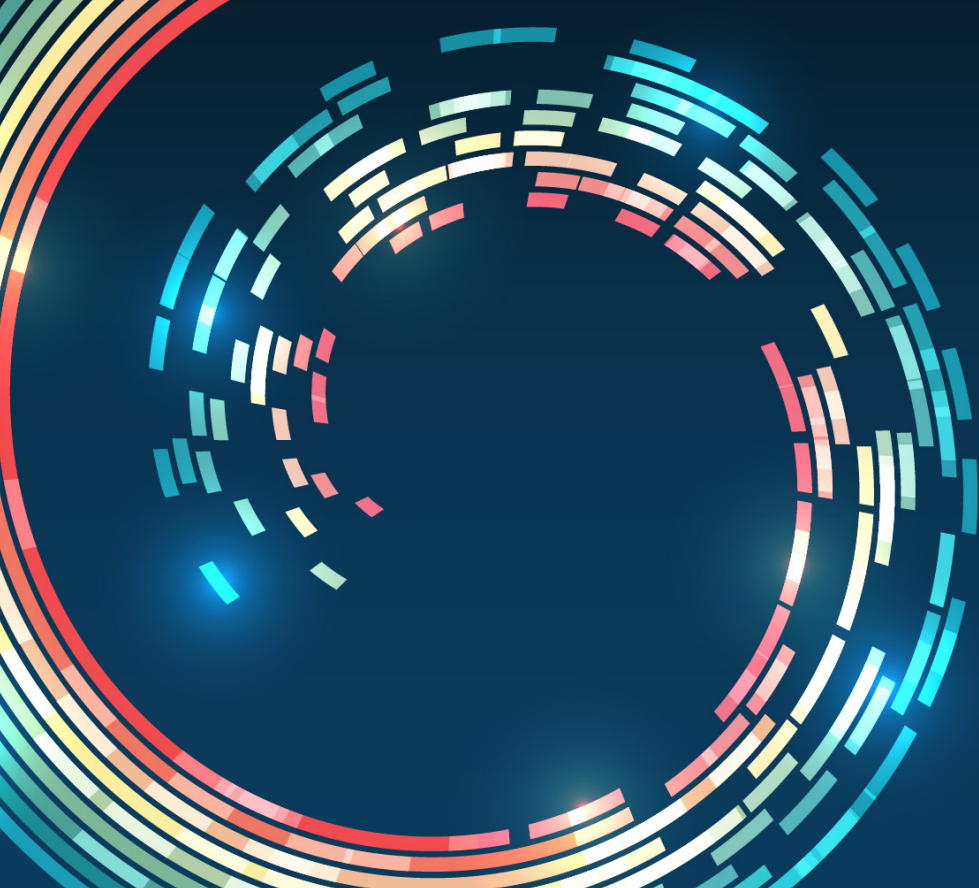
How Self-Employed Professionals Can Stay Productive Without Burning Out



Being self-employed presents numerous challenges every day. While the autonomy of self-employment is nice, it isn't always a walk in the park. From long workdays to even longer work nights, burnout is a high-risk factor. The increased workload only decreases your motivation and energy, putting your productivity at risk.

You might be asking yourself, "How can I prevent burnout, increase momentum, and stay the course while maintaining my composure?"

This article dives deep into how to maintain an efficient workflow as a self-employed professional in a world where time is money.



“  
How can I prevent burnout, increase momentum, and stay the course while maintaining my composure?  
”

## Understanding, and Beating, the Mid-Year Slump

Motivation tends to drop when you least expect it. At the beginning of the year, you're eager to get started; you have new goals and ideas, and you're ready to run. As the year goes on, you eventually find yourself in what's known as the 'mid-year slump.' Here's what it is and how to get out of it.

### What Is the Mid-Year Slump and How to Avoid It?

The mid-year slump is when motivation declines, stemming from underlying factors that you may have swept under the rug. Several factors contribute to this slump, including irregular income, overcommitting, and limited social support.

### Irregular Income Leading to Financial Pressure

There's something to be said about predictability when it comes to a steady paycheck. Without that predictable paycheck, it can be hard not to feel the pressure of working nonstop. However, this mentality can do more harm than good, leading to **burnout from overworking**.

### Overcommitting to Too Much Work

As an entrepreneur, you have a duty to hold yourself accountable while ensuring you're making enough money to provide for yourself and your family. You may think that working yourself to the bone will make you more productive, but in fact it has the opposite effect; yep, churning and burning. You can avoid **toxic productivity**, or working so much that you actually become less productive and burn out faster, by taking breaks, eating right, and exercising regularly, all the pillars of a **happy, healthy life**.

### Limited Social Support

Entrepreneurs, especially small business owners, often struggle with **motivation** due to a lack of social support. To combat this, consider joining online communities, local networking groups, or industry meetups. Building connections provides encouragement, accountability, and a **sense of belonging**, which can significantly boost your motivation.

# Steps to Overcome the Mid-Year Slump

Now that you know what the mid-year slump is, you might be wondering how to overcome it. Set S.M.A.R.T. goals, celebrate the wins, have an accountability partner, manage your time strategically, and plan your breaks.

## 1. Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Goals should be S.M.A.R.T.—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. Setting realistic goals ensures you stay motivated without feeling overwhelmed. Break larger objectives into smaller, manageable tasks to maintain steady progress and keep your momentum going. Clear goals can help you feel more confident and focused, which is essential for maintaining motivation and momentum.

- *Example:*

Secure two new clients in the next 30 days.

## 2. Celebrate the Wins

Reinforcing even the smallest of achievements can foster a sense of accomplishment. You don't need to go crazy when you celebrate your small victories; even a coffee shop drink or a sweet treat can be just as rewarding as more expensive items. Either way, it's important to celebrate the wins, both big and small.

## 3. Have an Accountability Partner

Sometimes it's not enough to **hold yourself accountable**, be your own boss, and have it all figured out. Having an accountability partner or mentor can provide you with structure and stability. There's no shame in having a buddy to check in with. Not only will they motivate you, but they will help you through your self-employment journey, through the ups and the downs.

## 4. Manage Your Time Strategically

Productivity isn't just about working longer and harder; it's about being strategic with the limited time you have and working smarter. Set your focus times to when you know you're most productive. Having a planner also helps you plan, prioritize, and strategize various projects.

For example, if you know you're more productive in the mornings, prioritize your more difficult tasks for the morning time and use the evenings for less intensive work.

## 5. Plan Scheduled Breaks to Stay Energized

Without planned breaks, those are likely the first to fall through the cracks. You can't be your best self if you're working 24/7 – it just isn't possible. Instead, consider trying the **Pomodoro Technique** for breaks, or something similar. Using the Pomodoro Technique, you select a task, focus on it for 25 minutes, take a short 5-minute break, repeat 4 times, and then finish with a 30-minute break. Of course, do what works best for you.

On another note, incorporating **exercise** into your day not only increases endorphins but also gives you more energy to push through the rest of your work. Additionally, it's essential to maintain a daily and weekly routine to keep your day-to-day structured and stable. For instance, plan when you will work on certain types of tasks, when you will have breaks, and when you will exercise to give you a layout of the week and upcoming deadlines to reduce anxiety.

# S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely



## Tips to Streamline Your Operations Without Hiring Help

To streamline your operations, start by identifying tasks that waste the majority of your time and don't help you make any money. This includes things like manual invoicing, repetitive emails, and disorganized workflows.

Ways to beat this include using automation tools to save time, such as payroll, project management, time-tracking, and planning tools.

Another way to streamline your workflow is to create templates for repetitive tasks, such as for emails, client proposals, invoices, and onboarding documents. By standardizing these items, you're saving time and ensuring consistency. Rather than rewriting the same information repeatedly, having templates can help you respond quickly and professionally without the added pressure.

You can also simplify your processes by using checklists or project management tools. Whether it's for project steps, client onboarding, or administrative tasks, checklists will reduce the mental load so you no longer have to remember every detail. This way, you're staying organized and completing tasks more efficiently.

## Tools and Routines That Support Long-Term Focus

The best way to support your focus long-term is by having tools and systems in place to manage your workload. You'll spend less time reacting to tasks and more time completing those tasks with intention.

Project and task management tools can help you visualize your priorities and deadlines. Additionally, project management tools that come with time-tracking allow you to better understand how your time is being used, as well as for invoicing purposes. Digital calendars are also valuable for scheduling focus time, meetings, and breaks so that nothing gets overlooked.

Routines are just as important as project and task management tools. Daily and weekly routines can help you establish structure, identify goals, and reduce decision fatigue.

When your day follows a predictable rhythm, your mind has more space to focus on meaningful work instead of constantly adjusting to change. Over time, these routines create consistency which can help reduce stress, improve efficiency, and support overall performance.

## Building Productivity Moving Forward

Moving forward, productivity should be measured by impact, not by the hours worked. By prioritizing efficient workflows, intentionally managing energy, and adopting tools that reduce friction, you can build steady momentum that supports both your business growth and personal well-being. The most effective productivity strategies are the ones you can maintain long-term.

Sustainable productivity is built on intentional improvements over time. Instead of trying to change everything all at once, focus on adjusting one habit, routine, or system at a time. These gradual changes are easier to maintain and lead to your overall success.

It's also important to remain flexible. Your business will evolve, and your productivity strategies should evolve with it, too. What works during one season may need to be adjusted in another. Regularly evaluating your workload, energy levels, and goals helps ensure that your approach remains aligned with your needs.

**Most importantly, remember that productivity is not about perfection.** Progress comes from showing up consistently, learning from challenges, and giving yourself the space to grow without burning out. Remember why you started your business to begin with and let that be a source of motivation.

ANNOUNCEMENT



## Dependent Scholarship Applications Opened January 1<sup>st</sup>

*Multiple College Scholarships of \$3,000 are Awarded Each Year*

This program is open to legal dependents of NASE Members, ages 16–24. To apply, students need to be high school students or college undergraduates planning to enroll in college for the upcoming fall semester. The application period is **January 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>**.

[APPLY NOW](#)

## See the Latest Press Releases from NASE



### National Tax Expert Shares Key Ways Americans Can Save on 2025 Tax Returns This Filing Season

Mar 11, 2026

With almost a month until the April 15th tax deadline, NASE offers key guidance on ways to save in preparing and filing your 2025 tax returns in final weeks of tax season.

[READ FULL STORY →](#)



### NASE President & CEO Keith Hall Reveals Powerful Tax Strategy for Small Business Owners in New Book, *Hire Your Kid*

Feb 19, 2026

As small business owners face continued cost pressures, regulatory complexity, and an unpredictable economic environment, Keith Hall is releasing a new book that offers a timely, IRS-compliant strategy...

[READ FULL STORY →](#)

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## College scholarships for your dependents.

*Over \$1.8 million has already been awarded!*



Since 1989, the NASE Dependent Scholarship Program has awarded more than **\$1.8 million** to members' dependents. Your son or daughter may qualify!

This award-winning program is open to legal dependents of NASE Members, ages 16-24. To apply, students need to be high school students or college undergraduates planning to enroll in college for the upcoming fall semester. Multiple college scholarships of **\$3,000** are awarded each year. The application period is January 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### Consideration is based upon:

- Leadership ability
- Academic performance
- Teacher recommendations
- Career and educational background
- School and community participation
- Financial need

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



### Common questions we address

- Starting a new business or expanding an existing one
- Buying or selling a business
- Choosing the right business legal and tax structure
- How and when to develop a business plan
- General business liability and insurance issues
- Financing and capital needs for a business
- Marketing, advertising and public relations
- Hiring, managing and terminating employees
- Dealing with government regulations
- Copyrights, trademarks and patents.

No matter what the question might be, the Business Strategy experts are available to help members one-on-one manage and grow their business.

To see more about this topic, [click here](#).



## Emergency help for you and your family when traveling more than 100 miles from home.

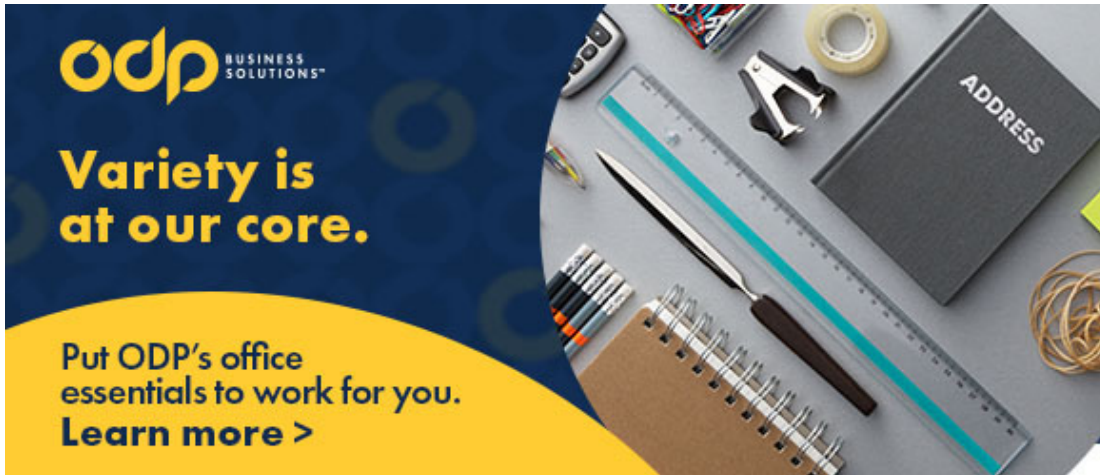
Most of us travel without being prepared for a medical or other emergency or knowing how to find and obtain treatment from qualified physicians and medical facilities. That’s what makes Assist America’s Global Emergency Services so important.

**The following benefits are available to Association Members at no additional cost when traveling 100 or more miles from home:**

- **Medical Consultation** — Calls to Assist America are evaluated by medical staff and referred to English-speaking doctors and/or hospitals.
- **Hospital Admission Guarantee** — Assist America will guarantee hospital admission outside the United States by validating a member’s health coverage or advancing funds to the hospital.
- **Emergency Evacuation** — Assist America uses whatever mode of transport, equipment and medical personnel necessary to evacuate you to the nearest facility capable of providing appropriate care when adequate medical facilities are not available at your location.
- **Medical Repatriation** — When medically necessary upon discharge, Assist America will arrange transport back to your home, with a medical or non-medical escort as needed.
- **Prescription Assistance** — If you lose or forget a prescription medication while traveling, Assist America will help replace that prescription.
- **Compassionate Visit** — If you are traveling alone and are to be hospitalized for more than seven days, Assist America will provide economy round-trip transportation to the place of hospitalization for a designated person of your choice.
- **Care of Minor Children** — Assist America will provide care and/or transportation of minor dependent children who are left unattended due to the medical incident.
- **Call Assist America in the event of an emergency.** Any services not arranged by Assist America will not be paid or reimbursed.

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 † Same-Day Print & Copy Services are excluded from 20-minute pickup.  
 Store Discount Program: For SDP Terms and Conditions, please visit <https://www.odpbusiness.com/marketing/storepurchasing/spc/terms-and-conditions>  
<https://www.odpbusiness.com/l/prelogin/spc-faq>  
 Free delivery: Minimum purchase required after discounts and before taxes. Orders outside our local delivery area and most furniture, oversized items, bulk items, cases of bottled water and other beverages, and special order items do not qualify. Non-qualifying orders incur a delivery charge. Delivery fees will be noted prior to purchase. Many orders can be delivered the next business day (between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.) if placed online or via phone by 3:00 p.m. or via fax by 1:00 p.m. local time (in most locations). Other restrictions apply. See [odpbusiness.com](https://www.odpbusiness.com), call 888.263.3423, or ask your account manager for details.  
 \$25 OFF \$200 COUPON: Valid only at [odpbusiness.com](https://www.odpbusiness.com) or by phone at 888.263.3423 or fax at 888.813.7272. Minimum purchase required after discounts and before tax. Offer not valid for government contract accounts. Not combinable with Store Purchasing or Store Discount Cards; or other offers and promotions. Use the coupon code for phone or fax orders or enter the coupon code to cart online at checkout. Excludes: 1) gift & prepaid cards; 2) technology & consumer electronic products & accessories, & software products; 3) performance protection plans; 4) postage & mailing/shipping services; 5) ink & toner; 6) electronic labelers & labeling accessories; 7) appliances; 8) simplehuman products; 9) subscription services; 10) services: off-site shredding, tech, furniture, marketing, administrative, & third-party services; 11) items by the pallet; & 12) premiums/free gifts with purchase. Coupon cannot be used as an account payment.  
 Coupon is good for one-time use only, is not transferable, and is not for resale or auction. No cash back. Excludes taxes. Void where prohibited. Not valid in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. We reserve the right to limit quantities sold to each customer. Limit 1 coupon per customer/business. Coupon expires 03/31/2026 11:59 PM ET.  
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# 2025 Growth Grant Winners

We would like to thank all of the NASE members who applied last year, we love to learn about your businesses and how you are making a positive impact in the communities in which you live. We would also like to congratulate those chosen to receive the Growth Grant award in 2025 as these 28 applications stood out amongst the sea of very well written and composed applications. From all of us here at NASE, thank you, well done and well deserved!



## Tanya Ferguson

Q1 2025

**A Special Place Pre K Academy | Belleville, Illinois**  
[asp2steam.com](http://asp2steam.com)

Tanya Ferguson, a NASE Member from Belleville, Illinois was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the first quarter of 2025. ASP2 STEAM Academy is a private school that specializes in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math as a full-service educational and developmental facility that provides an educational programing for children aged PreK through 3rd grade.



## David D'Arcangelo

Q1 2025

**Arc Angel Communications | Melrose, Massachusetts**  
[www.arcangelcommunications.com](http://www.arcangelcommunications.com)

David D'Arcangelo, a NASE Member from Melrose, Massachusetts was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the first quarter of 2025. Arc Angel Communications is a certified Disability Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE) offering disability inclusion, consulting, and public relations services for corporations, government agencies, and institutional organizations that can enhance their inclusion and diversity goals.



## Jeff Kreider

Q1 2025

**Lantana Farms | Bastrop, Texas**  
[www.localhoneybeecompany.com](http://www.localhoneybeecompany.com)

Jeff Kreider, a NASE Member from Bastrop, Texas was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the first quarter of 2025. Lantana Farms does business as Local Honey Bee Company where they farm bees for honey and make other bee-related items following organic, sustainable and eco friendly practices.



## Robert Pace

Q1 2025

**Wings of Hope Recovery | Middletown, Connecticut**  
[www.wingsofhoperecovery.com](http://www.wingsofhoperecovery.com)

Robert Pace, a NASE Member from Middletown, Connecticut was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the first quarter of 2025. Wings of Hope's mission is to empower individuals in their quest for recovery, offering a supportive and healing environment where residents can spread their wings and soar toward a life free from addiction.



## 2025 GROWTH GRANT WINNERS



### James Setzer

Q1 2025

**Images by Design | Virginia Beach, Virginia**

[www.imagesbydesign.org](http://www.imagesbydesign.org)

James Setzer, a NASE Member from Virginia Beach, Virginia was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the first quarter of 2025. Images by Design is committed to delivering exceptional photography and videography services that meet the evolving needs of their clients.



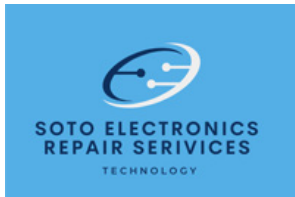
### Theresa Crichlow

Q1 2025

**BeeFavored | New York, New York**

[bee-favored.com](http://bee-favored.com)

Theresa Crichlow, a NASE Member from New York, New York was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the first quarter of 2025. BeeFavored offers quality specialty honey harvested on the rooftops in Harlem, NY. They have a vast variety of artisan honey blends, pure and raw honey, as well as other homemade products.



### Jesus Soto

Q1 2025

**Soto Electronic Repair | Kindred, Florida**

[www.linkedin.com/in/jesus-soto-b80170180](http://www.linkedin.com/in/jesus-soto-b80170180)

Jesus Soto, a NASE Member from Kindred, Florida was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the first quarter of 2025. Soto Electronic Repair provides consultation, repair and reengineering services to small and medium sized companies.



### Kenneth Strader

Q2 2025

**Back Creek Fabrication, LLC | Hayes, Virginia**

[www.backcreekfabrication.com](http://www.backcreekfabrication.com)

Kenneth Strader, a NASE Member from Hayes, Virginia was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the second quarter of 2025. Back Creek Fabrication is a local, family-owned trailer repair and custom fabrication shop specializing in trailer repair and custom projects in steel, aluminum, and stainless.



### Doug Bryant

Q2 2025

**Fresh & Clean | Redding, California**

[www.freshandclean.live](http://www.freshandclean.live)

Doug Bryant, a NASE Member from Redding, California was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the second quarter of 2025. Fresh & Clean specializes in solar panel cleaning, pressure washing, gutter cleaning, and window cleaning services for residential and commercial properties.



### Magan Scheel

Q2 2025

**From Paws to Wings | Owensville, Missouri**

[www.frompaws2wings.com](http://www.frompaws2wings.com)

Magan Scheel, a NASE Member from Owensville, Missouri was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the second quarter of 2025. Paws to Wings was established to provide a peaceful passing for pets in the comfort of their own home and help ease one of the most difficult aspects of pet ownership and end of life care.



## 2025 GROWTH GRANT WINNERS



### **Brittany Griffor**

Q2 2025

**Symphony Weddings & Events | Las Vegas, Nevada**

[www.symphonywed.com](http://www.symphonywed.com)

Brittany Griffor, a NASE Member from Las Vegas, Nevada was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the second quarter of 2025. Symphony Weddings & Events is a full-service wedding planning company for couples looking for a beautiful day, seamless planning experience and genuinely just want to have a really great time at their wedding.



### **John Codd (AARP)**

Q2 2025

**Nexus Firearms of America | Stafford, Virginia**

[www.nexusfirearmsusa.com](http://www.nexusfirearmsusa.com)

John Codd, a NASE Member from Stafford, Virginia was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the second quarter of 2025. Nexus Firearms of America is a veteran-owned, federally licensed firearms dealership specializing in firearms transfers, training and specialty items likes suppressors and short-barreled rifles.



### **Bryan Castle (AARP)**

Q2 2025

**Culture Connects LLC | Tucson, Arizona**

[cultureconnectsaz.org](http://cultureconnectsaz.org)

Bryan Castle, a NASE Member from Tucson, Arizona was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the second quarter of 2025. Culture Connects promotes diversity and inclusivity by offering a variety of dance styles, classes, and community events to celebrate and honor the beautiful cultural backgrounds of Tucson and beyond.



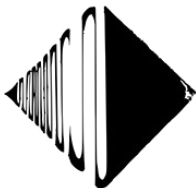
### **Tanya Ferguson (AARP)**

Q2 2025

**A Special Place Pre K Academy | Belleville, Illinois**

[asp2steam.com](http://asp2steam.com)

Tanya Ferguson, a NASE Member from Belleville, Illinois was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the second quarter of 2025. ASP2 STEAM Academy is a private school that specializes in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math as a full-service educational and developmental facility that provides an educational programing for children aged PreK through 3rd grade.



### **Hunter Blakely**

Q3 2025

**Blakely Studio, LLC | The Dalles, Oregon**

[www.facebook.com/BlakelyStudioMusic](http://www.facebook.com/BlakelyStudioMusic)

Hunter Blakely, a NASE Member from The Dalles, Oregon was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the third quarter of 2025. Blakely Studio provides music production and audio engineering services for The Dalles community as well as the surrounding area.



### **Nick Arellano**

Q3 2025

**Nacho Average Snacks Vending | Rancho Cucamonga, California**

Nick Arellano, a NASE Member from Rancho Cucamonga, California was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the third quarter of 2025. Nacho Average Snacks Vending provides snacking and vending services for Rancho Cucamonga and surrounding Inland Empire area.



# 2025 GROWTH GRANT WINNERS



## Erica Thompson

Q3 2025

**Drone Operations LLC | Mosinee, Wisconsin**

[droneops.tech](http://droneops.tech)

Erica Thompson, a NASE Member from Mosinee, Wisconsin was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the third quarter of 2025. Drone Operations LLC offers embodied AI robotics, autonomous drones & UAV manufacturing & AI consulting.



## Rashida Vassell

Q3 2025

**Safahla Medical PLLC | Corning, New York**

[www.safahlamedical.com](http://www.safahlamedical.com)

Rashida Vassell, a NASE Member from Corning, New York was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the third quarter of 2025. Safahla Medical PLLC offers bespoke wellness for longevity medicine and aesthetic care.



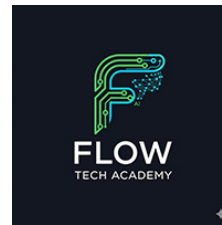
## Sorraya Guillaume (AARP)

Q3 2025

**Eskae Interiors | Miami, Florida**

[eskaeinteriors.com](http://eskaeinteriors.com)

Sorraya Guillaume, a NASE Member from Miami, Florida was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the third quarter of 2025. Eskae Interiors offers luxury interior design in Miami, specializing in bespoke spaces that balance elegance and function. From full-scale renovations and custom kitchens to curated furniture and décor, each project is tailored to reflect refined taste and individual lifestyle.



## Edwin Jean-Gilles (AARP)

Q3 2025

**Flow Tech Academy | Cumming, Georgia**

[flowacademy.tech](http://flowacademy.tech)

Edwin Jean-Gilles, a NASE Member from Cumming, Georgia was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the third quarter of 2025. Flow Tech Academy is a premium educational content company specializing in AI integration training for IT professionals and businesses.



## Ralph Sepulveda (AARP)

Q3 2025

**Stargazer Electric and Lighting Inc. | Cape Coral, Florida**

[stargazerelectric.com](http://stargazerelectric.com)

Ralph Sepulveda, a NASE Member from Cape Coral, Florida was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the third quarter of 2025. Stargazer Electric and Lighting has over 25 years of experience delivering expert residential, commercial, and modular electrical services.



## Shawnette Bellamy

Q4 2025

**Black Ink Consulting, LLC | Mobile, Indiana**

[www.blackink.com](http://www.blackink.com)

Shawnette Bellamy, a NASE Member from Mobile, Indiana was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the fourth quarter of 2025. Black Ink Consulting provides accessible, high-impact coaching, consulting, and training that blend strategy, systems, and values for professionals, entrepreneurs, and mission-driven organizations.



## 2025 GROWTH GRANT WINNERS



### Jonathan LeBars

Q4 2025

**The Punch House | Central Point, Oregon**

[www.punchhousewine.com](http://www.punchhousewine.com)

Jonathan LeBars, a NASE Member from Central Point, Oregon was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the fourth quarter of 2025. The Punch House is a boutique winery located in southern Oregon specializing in localize, handcrafted Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc.



### Sherri Combs

Q4 2025

**Silver Streak Senior Services | Saginaw, Texas**

[silverstreakseniorservices.com](http://silverstreakseniorservices.com)

Sherri Combs, a NASE Member from Saginaw, Texas was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the fourth quarter of 2025. Silver Streak Senior Services aims to make it simple, safe, and stress-free for seniors and caregivers to find trusted services and support.



### Griffin Strecker

Q4 2025

**ArtWall Pro | Lakewood, Colorado**

[artwallpro.co](http://artwallpro.co)

Griffin Strecker, a NASE Member from Lakewood, Colorado was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the fourth quarter of 2025. ArtWall Pro believes every wall can be enhanced. They combine cutting-edge technology with artistic craftsmanship to help clients tell their story through stunning, custom-printed art that inspires and captivates.



### Chad Sotomayor

Q4 2025

**QuickPlanet | Seattle, Washington**

[www.quickplanet.com](http://www.quickplanet.com)

Chad Sotomayor, a NASE Member from Seattle, Washington was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the fourth quarter of 2025. QuickPlanet provides information technology solutions that help businesses adapt to the changing technological landscapes, navigate the complexities and allows businesses to concentrate on what truly matters – their customers.



### Johnika Webster

Q4 2025

**Kinder Kampus, LLC | New Britain, Connecticut**

[kinderkampus.org](http://kinderkampus.org)

Johnika Webster, a NASE Member from New Britain, Connecticut was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the fourth quarter of 2025. Kinder Kampus is a childcare facility that believes every child deserves a safe, nurturing, and inclusive space to grow, learn, and thrive.



### Jourdan Wolcott

Q4 2025

**AdaptAbilities | Dallas, Texas**

[adaptabilities.net](http://adaptabilities.net)

Jourdan Wolcott, a NASE Member from Dallas, Texas was awarded a NASE Growth Grant in the fourth quarter of 2025. AdaptAbilities creates and provides affordable, high-quality switch adapted toys and assistive devices for people of all ages.



# The DHS Shutdown Continues and a War Abroad

The Department of Homeland Security has been without funding for over five weeks, air travelers are standing in hours-long security lines during spring break, and the president has rejected the most viable path to a deal — insisting instead on tying a funding resolution to a sweeping elections overhaul bill with no realistic path to passage. All of this is unfolding against the backdrop of an active U.S. military conflict with Iran that is already reshaping global energy markets and threatening to impose serious economic pain on American households. The compounding effect of these two crises — one manufactured in Washington, one ignited abroad — has economists and policy watchers deeply unsettled.

## The DHS Shutdown

The DHS shutdown began on February 14, after Congress failed to fund the agency. The impasse is fundamentally a dispute over immigration enforcement. Senate Democrats have demanded an array of policy changes as part of any funding bill, including requiring ICE agents to get a warrant from a judge before forcefully entering homes. The shutdown's political origins trace back to ICE's role in the deaths of two American citizens in Minneapolis in January, which galvanized Democratic demands for greater oversight. Republicans, who control the White House and both chambers of Congress, have rejected the Democratic approach of funding TSA and other



DHS divisions separately while continuing to negotiate over ICE — insisting on funding the entire department as one package.

That leaves the TSA, FEMA, the Secret Service, and the Coast Guard working without pay. At least 366 transportation security officers have quit since the start of the shutdown, and lines at security checkpoints have stretched for hours at airports across the country. The real-world consequences have been impossible to ignore.

For a brief window last weekend, a resolution appeared within reach. According to Punchbowl News, Senate Majority Leader John Thune approached the president with a compromise shaped by pressure from Senate Republicans and some White House officials. Thune told Trump that Democrats would accept an arrangement that would keep airport security running and ensure TSA agents are paid, while leaving the ICE dispute to be resolved later through a party-line reconciliation bill. It was, by Washington's standards, a reasonable off-ramp.

Cracks are beginning to show in Senate GOP unity as the shutdown stretches into its 38th day, with some Republicans worrying that the strategy of blaming Democrats won't produce a deal and could politically boomerang back on their own party.

## A Second Front: Iran and the Economic Overhang

Washington's dysfunction is playing out against an economic backdrop already under significant stress. The U.S.-Iran conflict has put the Strait of Hormuz on a knife's edge, with the United States striking Iran and triggering an active military conflict with direct implications for global energy supply. The conflict has already led to the suspension of about a fifth of global crude and natural gas supply, as

Tehran targets ships in the vital Strait of Hormuz and attacks energy infrastructure across the region.

The price effects have been swift and severe. Oil prices rose as much as 50 percent to nearly \$120 a barrel before falling and still remain about 17 percent higher than before the strikes on Iran on February 28.

Higher prices for oil and gas increase costs for gasoline, electricity, fertilizer, food, and more — many parts of the U.S. economy remain dependent on fossil fuels.

Air travel — already disrupted by the DHS shutdown — faces a double hit. Many airlines no longer hedge or lock in jet fuel prices, and since the start of the conflict, some jet fuel prices have doubled.

## The Compounding Problem

A weakened TSA apparatus strains the aviation sector; an unresolved DHS shutdown signals governing dysfunction at a moment when markets are already skittish; and an active conflict in the Gulf is injecting inflationary pressure into an economy that had only recently made progress bringing prices down.

Senate Majority Leader Thune has threatened to cancel the two-week Easter recess unless DHS funding is resolved. Whether that pressure produces a breakthrough or simply adds another deadline that Washington blows through remains to be seen.

What is clear is that the costs of inaction are rising — at the airport security line, at the gas pump, and in the broader economy. Washington's self-inflicted wounds rarely heal quickly, and this one is being sustained by both parties at a moment when the country can least afford the distraction.

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